ONTARIO PARKS

North Beach

Preliminary Management Plan

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Invitation to Comment

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR or Ministry), Ontario Parks is currently developing a management plan for North Beach Provincial Park as part of a multi-staged planning process. At this stage, the North Beach Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan is presented.

This document contains proposed policies relating to resource management, operations and development that will guide the long-term management of North Beach Provincial Park. After careful consideration of the collected background information and comments received, this document represents Ontario Parks' preferred policies for the park.

You are invited to review and comment on the preliminary park management plan for a period of 45 days following its release. As part of the consultation process, an open house will be held upon release of this plan. Open house dates and venues will be advertised separately.

All comments regarding the preliminary management plan should be made by July 29, 2013, and should be submitted in writing to:

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The MNR is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority of Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*. Any personal information you provide (address, name, telephone, etc.) will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; however, your comments will become part of the record of consultation and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may be used by the MNR to send you information about future MNR planning initiatives in the park area. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact the Senior Park Planner, Ontario Parks Southeast Zone, at 613-531-5722.

Your participation in planning for North Beach Provincial Park is appreciated. All comments received will be considered in preparing the final park management plan.

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1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 Legislation and Policy Basis for Management

North Beach Provincial Park is managed according to the purpose, principles and objectives of the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006* (PPCRA) and related provincial policies (available on the Internet at www.OntarioParks.com).

The PPCRA has two guiding principles for park planning and management:
1) Maintaining ecological integrity shall be the first priority and restoring ecological integrity shall be considered.
2) Opportunities for consultation shall be provided.

1.2 Statement of Environmental Values and the *Environmental Bill of Rights*

Under the *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR) the MNR must develop a Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) that describes how the purposes of the EBR are to be considered whenever decisions are made in the Ministry that might significantly affect the environment. This includes decisions made as a result of preparing management direction for a protected area.

The Ministry's SEV has been considered throughout the planning process. The management direction for North Beach Provincial Park will further the objectives of managing Ontario's resources on an environmentally sustainable basis.

1.3 Aboriginal Peoples

North Beach Provincial Park is located within traditional Mississauga First Nation territory and within an area of interest to the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte. Archaeological assessment has been carried out in some areas of the park but has not revealed any pre-contact resources (Heritage Quest Inc. 2005) and there are no known Aboriginal archaeological values identified within the park boundary (Section 6.1.3).

1.4 Planning Context

This park management plan has been prepared consistent with Ministry direction contained in Our Sustainable Future: A Renewed Call to Action (2011), in Renewing Our Commitment to Protecting What Sustains Us: Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, 2011 and in Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies (1992 update). Additionally, North Beach Provincial Park will be managed to protect any species at risk and their habitat in a manner consistent with the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. All activities undertaken in North Beach Provincial Park must comply with A Class Environmental

Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (Class EA-PPCR) (2005), where applicable.

1.5 Summary of Significant Management Concerns

Together, Sandbanks Provincial Park and North Beach Provincial Park encompass a significant portion of the largest freshwater baymouth sandbar system in the world. The remainder of this dune system, which contains globally and provincially rare coastal wetland habitat known as panne, is present at Wellers Bay to the north and in three Crown-owned parcels south of North Beach Provincial Park (**Figure 1**, inset). These Crown dunes are separated by privately-owned lands.

Earlier in the planning process, the three Crown dunes were identified as potential additions to North Beach Provincial Park.

The Crown dunes are currently used – mostly by local residents – for picnicking, camping, walking and recreational vehicle use. Garbage is a problem, and unauthorized all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use has caused considerable damage to dune vegetation and structure in some areas. Adding the Crown dunes to the park would enable these areas to be operated as part of the park and subject to regulations under the PPCRA and could afford greater protection through increased enforcement of ATV activity.

The three Crown dunes are further described in **Section 4**, but are not proposed for addition to the park at this time.

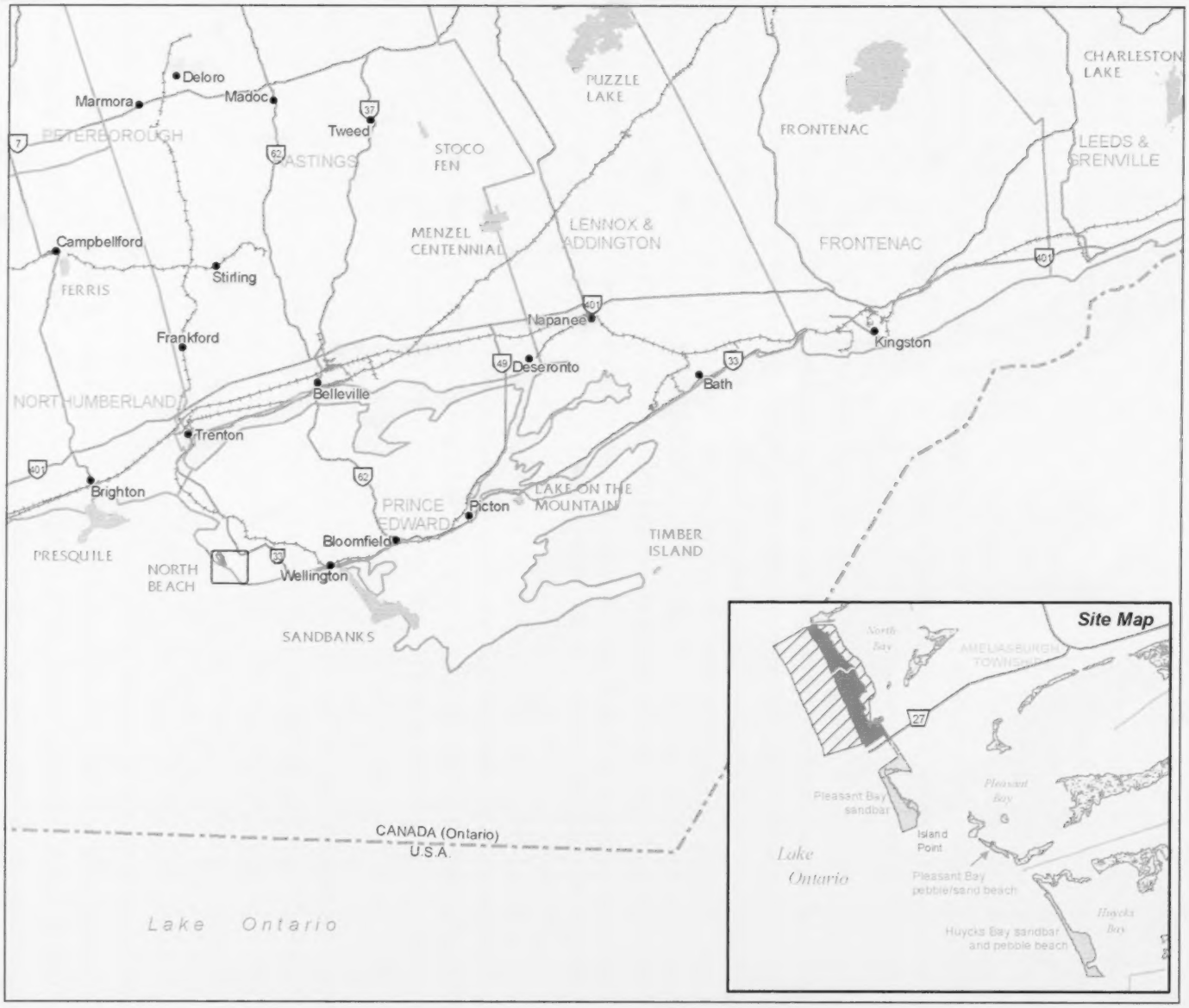
2.0 INTRODUCTION

North Beach Provincial Park is a 90 ha park located within the Municipality of Prince Edward County, approximately 15 km south of Trenton and 60 km west of Kingston (**Figure 1**). The park, offering day use facilities and regularly attracting 25,000 to 30,000 visitors annually, has long been a regular destination for local residents but is becoming increasingly popular with out of town visitors. Nearby, Sandbanks Provincial Park provides camping facilities that attract visitors from a wider geographic area.

The park is within the western portion of Ecodistrict 6E-15, which is characterized by Lake Ontario coastal shoreline and wetlands (Hills 1959). North Beach Provincial Park is one of several biologically significant sandbars that stretch along the western shore of Prince Edward County, sheltering nearby bays and their associated coastal wetlands. The park also supports panne habitat, which is globally and provincially rare.

FIGURE 1

REGIONAL SETTING



North Beach

Region Map

Area Features

- North Beach Provincial Park
- North Beach Provincial Park Lakebed
- Proposed Park Addition
- Regulated Provincial Park
- Crown Land

Transportation Features

- Major Autoroute
- Railway

Base Features

- County
- Lakes, Rivers
- Wetland
- Ontario / International Boundary

0 5 10 15 20 km

N

Ontario

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This map should not be relied on as a precise indicator of routes or locations, nor as a guide to navigation. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) shall not be liable in any way for the use of, or reliance upon, this map or any information on this map.

Projection: UTM Zone 18
Datum: North American Datum 1983
Base derived from: NRVIS (Natural Resource Value Information System)
Produced by: Ontario Parks, Southeast Zone

This management plan provides the long term direction for managing North Beach Provincial Park, including the park's purpose and vision, permitted uses, zoning and implementation priorities. This plan is written with a 20-year perspective in mind. Management plan amendment and examination is addressed in **Section 10.0**.

3.0 PARK CLASSIFICATION

Through park classification, Ontario's provincial parks are organized into broad categories, each of which has particular purposes and characteristics. North Beach Provincial Park is a recreational class park.

Recreational class parks provide a wide variety of compatible outdoor recreation opportunities in attractive natural surroundings. North Beach Provincial Park, located on a sandbar that is approximately 1400 m long and 260 m wide, is a high quality beach that provides opportunities for swimming, picnicking, boating and fishing, while offering scenic views of Lake Ontario.

4.0 BOUNDARY

North Beach Provincial Park was established in 1970. This 90 ha park (**Figure 1**) consists of 26 ha of upland along a baymouth sandbar and 64 ha of adjacent lakebed, with 11 ha extending approximately 92 m into North Bay to the east and 53 ha extending approximately 402 m into Lake Ontario to the west. The park's northern and southern boundaries are roughly defined by the end of the sandbar, although to the south the boundary extends onto the adjacent limestone plain at the official park entry point off County Road 27.

4.1 Proposed Park Additions

The park is part of a system of dunes that, to the south, includes 18 ha of Crown land in three parcels at Pleasant Bay and Huycks Bay: the Pleasant Bay sandbar (locally referred to as the "South Beach" dunes), the Pleasant Bay pebble/sand beach and the Huycks Bay sandbar and pebble beach. The park and adjacent Crown dunes are surrounded and interspersed by privately-owned rural agricultural land on limestone plain.

In 1973, Ontario Parks acquired 4 ha of private land to link North Beach Provincial Park to the Pleasant Bay sandbar in the event of future park expansion. This acquired property will be added to the park through regulation under the PPCRA.

Ontario Parks also remains interested in regulating the Crown land sandbar parcel at Pleasant Bay. Linking Pierson Point with Island Point (referred to

locally as Alexander's Island or Huyck's Island), this 900 m (of which 800 m is Crown land and 100 m is privately owned) stretch of sandbar rivals those at North Beach and Sandbanks. However, the dunes and pannes are being degraded by motorized vehicle use; both features are in need of restoration.

An historic 40-foot wide road allowance, described in *Road By-Laws of Quarter Sessions, Prince Edward County, 1811-1833*, follows the county's western shoreline of Lake Ontario. This road allowance currently provides sole access to the privately-owned Island Point via the acquired property and the Pleasant Bay sandbar. Ontario Parks' interest in adding the Pleasant Bay sandbar Crown parcel to North Beach Provincial Park is conditional on establishing an alternate road access route to Island Point.

South of Island Point, the Pleasant Bay pebble/sand beach Crown dune is 400 m long. In some years, a narrow channel toward the centre of the parcel is open from late fall through to early spring, allowing water exchange between Pleasant Bay and Lake Ontario. This dune currently has no significant ecological value and will no longer be considered for addition to the park.

The Huycks Bay sandbar and pebble beach is a narrow sandbar with small dunes that extend approximately 800 m after which the substrate becomes pebble beach that continues another 650 m south along the shore to Huyck's Point. County Road 20 provides good access to the point for recreational use, but as there are currently no known significant ecological features, this Crown dune will no longer be considered for addition to the park.

4.2 Park Management within the Greater Ecosystem

Ontario Parks is committed to an ecosystem approach to park planning and management. The PPCRA, which governs activities within provincial parks, pertains only to lands and waters within park boundaries. An ecosystem approach allows park management to consider the relationship between the park and the surrounding environment. At North Beach Provincial Park, the greater ecosystem includes adjacent wetlands, as well as the complete sandbar system along Lake Ontario.

Park management plan policies apply only to the area within the regulated boundary of the park. Within the park boundary, park values and features will be protected through appropriate zoning, control of land use and activities, education, and by monitoring ecological impacts.

Ontario Parks will support, in principle, property acquisition for the purposes of addition to the park, provided the acquisition is anticipated to enhance park values. If suitable lands within, nearby or adjacent to the park become available for acquisition they will be evaluated with regard to their contribution to park objectives, willing seller/willing buyer and other factors including available funding.

5.0 PURPOSE AND VISION

The purpose of North Beach Provincial Park is:

To protect – and stimulate appreciation for – the biologically and geologically significant sandbar system, while continuing to offer visitors high-quality compatible, ecologically sustainable recreational opportunities in a scenic setting.

The vision for the park is that it will be a place where both the natural and recreational values of a great lakes coastal sandbar are preserved for visitors to experience.

6.0 OBJECTIVES

6.1 Protection

Ontario Parks plays an important role in representing and conserving the diversity of Ontario's natural features and ecosystems across the broader landscape. Protected areas include representative examples of life and earth science features and cultural heritage features within ecologically or geologically defined regions. Ontario's Ecological Land Classification system (Lee et. al. 1998) provides the basis for the life science feature assessment, and the geological themes provide the basis for earth science assessment.

The protection objective for North Beach Provincial Park is:

To contribute to the provincial protected areas system by protecting and enhancing the park's ecologically sensitive dune, panne and coastal wetland habitats.

Protection will not be limited to significant features. Park management will be directed toward maintaining a healthy, diverse and sustainable natural environment, which will enhance achievement of the park's other objectives.

6.1.1 Life Sciences

Life science information for North Beach Provincial Park is based on research and investigation of the sandbar system and adjacent coastal wetlands, making it difficult to discuss the park in isolation of the greater ecosystem.

Recognized for their contribution to the complete sandbar system (**Section 1.5**), the dunes of North Beach Provincial Park, and those along Pleasant and Huycks Bays, have been identified as sites of biological significance (Ecological Services 2001). The North Beach dunes and Pleasant Bay sandbar historically contained

low, wet habitats known as pannes. Panne wetlands are a globally and provincially rare vegetation community, and in Ontario they are confined to coastal sandbars along the Great Lakes. Although remnant panne is present at both North Beach and Pleasant Bay, this habitat has been negatively impacted by recreational use and exists in a highly disturbed form.

Although the provincially rare little bluestem—switchgrass—beachgrass dune grassland vegetation community, ranked S2 by the MNR's Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC), has been used to describe the dunes of North Beach Provincial Park (NHIC Elements Database report for EO ID 66524), neither little bluestem nor switchgrass have been confirmed within the park in recent years. Rather, the park's inland dunes represent a mosaic of open and shrub sand dune ecosites, neither of which can be accurately described to type using Ontario's current Ecological Land Classification system.

Outside the park, at Pleasant Bay to the south, the sandbar contains several regionally rare or uncommon plant species, while the provincially significant wetland is an important stopover for migrating waterfowl (Mosquin Bio-Information 1985).

6.1.2 Earth Sciences

Prince Edward County is a 104,500 ha limestone plain of the Lindsay Formation extending into Lake Ontario (Chapman and Putnam 1984). North Beach Provincial Park, particularly the baymouth sandbar that encloses North Bay, is part of one of the largest freshwater baymouth bar sand dune systems in the world. This system was formed by the erosion and transport of glacial deposits. Landforms in the park include dunes, pannes and beaches.

6.1.3 Cultural Heritage Resources

A recent assessment of the dunes within North Beach Provincial Park did not uncover any pre-contact archaeological resources (Heritage Quest Inc. 2005), although evidence may remain concealed due to the highly dynamic nature of the sandbars. This assessment also investigated the nearby Pleasant Bay and Huycks Bay sandbars, but no cultural heritage resources were found.

6.2 Recreation

The park's recreation objective is:

To offer day use visitors high quality beach and water based recreational opportunities that are compatible with the park's natural values, such that impacts to ecological processes are reduced.

Established for the purpose of providing beach recreational opportunities, North Beach Provincial Park now offers a wide range of day use facilities, including opportunities for picnicking, canoeing, boating and fishing. Swimming along the sandy beach is a very popular activity at the park. On good-weather weekends through the height of summer, park attendance often reaches capacity and visitors are turned away. The park is only staffed during the peak summer months. In the off-season when the park is closed, visitors are permitted to stroll along the beach or partake in winter activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Facility development and maintenance, along with heavy recreational use, has negatively affected the park's dune vegetation and communities and interfered with natural sand movement (Davidson, 1990). Managing facilities and recreational use so as to restore and protect the park's natural heritage values is necessary at North Beach Provincial Park.

6.3 Heritage Appreciation

The park's heritage appreciation objective is:

To stimulate appreciation of the sandbar system by balancing heritage protection with recreational enjoyment.

Informal footpaths connect the lake and bay sides of the park, allowing exploration and appreciation of the North Beach dune. The Lake Ontario shoreline offers scenic views over the lake toward Nicholson and Scotch Bonnet islands and the Presqu'ile peninsula.

6.4 Scientific Research

The park's scientific research objective is:

To facilitate ecological monitoring within the park so as to better understand the effects of recreation on the park's natural heritage.

Dune and wetland features within and adjacent to the park are significant components of the broader landscape from both a natural heritage appreciation and recreational use perspective. Understanding the natural processes occurring within the park will guide use, operations and resource management toward maintaining and improving the ecological integrity of North Beach Provincial Park.

7.0 PARK POLICIES

The following policies apply to the whole park.

7.1 Industrial and Commercial Uses

- The following industrial and commercial uses are not permitted within the park:
  - prospecting, staking of mining claims, developing mineral interests and working mines;
  - extraction of sand, gravel or topsoil; and
  - commercial trapping.
- Electricity generation is not permitted, except for in-park use.

Active commercial fishing and bait harvesting licenses for Lake Ontario fall outside the jurisdiction of the park.

7.2 Resource Management Policies

North Beach Provincial Park will be managed in accordance with provincial park policies for recreational class parks. These policies will guide the management of park resources consistent with the PPCRA and with the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. MNR will consider adaptive management approaches when managing park resources.

7.2.1 Land Management

Land management will be directed toward sustaining natural ecological processes on the landscape.

- Effects of existing facilities and infrastructure on coastal processes will be considered and, as structures or services are replaced or phased out, attempts will be made to reduce impacts (e.g., by consolidating buildings and services; redesigning roads, parking and trails).
- Ontario Parks will obtain all aggregate required for use in the park from sources located outside the park. Aggregates include gravel, sand, stone or other prescribed material under the *Aggregate Resources Act*.

7.2.2 Water Management

- There are no water control structures in the park. No dams or weirs will be built in the park.
- The park's sandbar forms a natural water-level control for North Bay. However, if waters in the bay become artificially high, park staff may take action, such as clearing the culvert or dredging the outflow creek between North Bay and Lake Ontario, to help manage water levels in the bay. Any actions taken will follow appropriate provincial, municipal and conservation authority procedures and approvals.

- Where possible, new development or redevelopment will be undertaken so as not to disrupt natural drainage. If possible, natural drainage will be restored where it has been disrupted by previous or existing development.

7.2.3 Waste Management

- All sewage and solid waste will be disposed of in accordance with Ministry of Environment regulations.

7.2.4 Alien and Invasive Species

Alien species are plants, animals and micro-organisms that have been unintentionally or deliberately introduced by human activity into areas outside their natural past or present distribution. Invasive species are those alien species whose introduction or spread threatens the environment, the economy and/or society, including human health.

- Alien species will not be deliberately introduced into the park.
- Where invasive alien species threaten natural or cultural values, a control program may be undertaken if feasible and practical.
- Invasive plant species control will be in compliance with any existing best management practices or strategies, and will be undertaken in such a way as to have minimal effects on the park environment.
- Signage will be installed at the canoe launch to North Bay to caution visitors of the risk of invasive alien species and to identify means of limiting their spread.
- Where possible, Ontario Parks will assist MNR Peterborough District and other partners in monitoring invasive alien species at North Beach Provincial Park.
- Information on the threat of invasive alien species and how to prevent their spread will continue to be made available to park visitors to help avoid introducing new species into the park.

7.2.5 Extirpated Native Species

- Extirpated native species may be reintroduced, and existing populations replenished, if biologically feasible, acceptable and desirable for perpetuating park values.

7.2.6 Insects and Disease

- The occurrence of native insects and diseases is recognized as an integral component of the park's ecology. Native insects and diseases will normally be allowed to progress naturally, except where a safety hazard results or park values become threatened.

- If outbreaks of alien or native insect and disease species threaten park values, visitors or adjoining private lands, the outbreak will be controlled, where feasible, using biological and species-specific controls whenever possible.
- Where control is undertaken, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease, so as to have minimal effects on the surrounding park environment.

7.2.7 Pesticide Application and Use

- Pesticides may be used to protect park values and to ensure park visitor safety. Typical uses include:
  - natural resource management projects to control invasive species, protect or restore the habitat of native species, or to protect or restore rare ecosystems; and
  - control of poison ivy.
- Where pesticides provide the only feasible option for control, chemicals having low or no soil activity and for which environmental impacts have been tested and shown to be minimal will be selected and used in accordance with integrated pest management principles.
- All pesticide use must be in accordance with park policy, Ontario's *Pesticides Act* and regulations, as well as any additional Ministry of the Environment requirements.

7.2.8 Fire Management

North Beach Provincial Park consists mostly of semi-open sand dune habitat, with very limited tree cover. It has been suggested that natural fire regimes for sand dunes included a combination of drought and frequent fires (Catling and Catling 1993, in Van Sleeuwen 2006).

The Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario (2004) provides strategic direction for managing wildfire across Ontario. North Beach Provincial Park is in the Southern Ontario Fire Management Zone according to this provincial strategy. This fire management zone is located outside the fire region of Ontario; therefore municipalities have a mandate to provide forest fire protection. The Municipality of Prince Edward County fire department is responsible for fire protection and response in the park area.

Fire management within North Beach Provincial Park will help to restore and maintain ecological integrity while preventing personal injury, loss of values and social disruption.

- Fuel caches are not permitted in the park.

Prescribed burning is the deliberate, planned and knowledgeable application of fire by authorized personnel to a specific land area to accomplish predetermined objectives.

- Funding permitting, prescribed burning may be used to restore and maintain the park's semi-open sand dune habitat. Plans for any prescribed burning will be developed in accordance with MNR policy in cooperation with MNR fire management staff and/or the municipal fire department.

7.2.9 Species at Risk

- Species at risk and their habitats will be protected in a manner consistent with the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* and associated regulations.
- There are no records of species at risk in North Beach Provincial Park, although suitable habitat for such species exists nearby. Should any species at risk be found to occur in the park, recovery strategies and implementation plans may be prepared by a recovery team. Actions identified in any corresponding government response statements may be implemented in accordance with Ontario Parks' policies.

7.2.10 Vegetation Management

- Vegetation management will be directed toward promoting the health and diversity of natural vegetation communities, particularly within natural environment zones.
- Where planting or seeding is necessary, use will be made of species native to the park and sources of these species that originate in or near the park.

Hazard Trees

- Safety will take precedence when dead limbs or standing trees pose a risk to the public or park staff. Dead standing trees provide important habitat for wildlife and contribute to ecological processes; these will only be removed when necessary, based on an assessment of the risk they pose.
- As much as possible, fallen trees and brush will be left to deteriorate naturally, unless they pose a threat to health or safety, or interfere with regular park operations.
- Dead or dying trees that are infested with damaging insects or disease – regardless of whether the infestation is native or non-native – may be cut, chipped and removed from the park and disposed of at local landfills to reduce or eliminate the spread of infestation to the greater park area.

Dune Vegetation Management

The dunes at North Beach Provincial Park have become degraded due to vegetation loss from trampling and erosion.

- Dune restoration may be undertaken by physically directing pedestrian traffic along designated paths and restoring native vegetation to degraded areas. Restoration methods may include:
  - erecting snow fences to funnel pedestrians to specific paths;
  - installing boardwalks along eroding paths; and
  - planting local-stock marram grass within trampled areas and within the footprints of former park infrastructure.
- Dune restoration projects will take into consideration the natural sand movement of the dunes.

7.2.11 Fisheries Management

An ecological framework for recreational fisheries management in Ontario, developed in 2005, guides fisheries management at the provincial level. North Beach Provincial Park is within Fisheries Management Zone 20.

- Fisheries management decisions for Lake Ontario and for North Bay are led by MNR Peterborough District. Wherever possible, the park will support efforts to maintain and/or enhance native, self-sustaining fish populations in park boundary waters.
- Park visitor education will be used to increase awareness of good angling practices, as outlined in the annual Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary.
- Park infrastructure development and other permitted activities will consider potential impacts on fish and fish habitat.

7.2.12 Cultural Heritage Resources

- There are no known cultural heritage resources in the park. If such resources are discovered, decisions affecting them shall be based on appropriate studies and research (including analysis of physical, documentary and oral evidence) aimed at understanding the resource's cultural heritage value, including its level of significance (e.g., local, regional, provincial), the impact of proposed activities on its cultural heritage value and attributes, and measures to mitigate these impacts.
- Cultural heritage resources that may be impacted by any park projects and activities shall be identified and managed as per Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties (*Ontario Heritage Act*).
- All areas of archaeological potential that may be impacted by any activities associated with site restoration, park construction, operation, maintenance or site restoration shall undergo archaeological assessment. Impacts may include any form of soil disturbance or alteration.
- Recommendations from a Stage 1/2 archaeological assessment of the park and adjacent lands (Heritage Quest Inc. 2005) will be considered:

  - Areas exposed by significant wind storms may be investigated for potential archaeological resources; and
  - The mainland area along the Pleasant Bay shoreline will be subject to Stage 2 investigation in advance of any proposed modifications of the landscape.
- Communities, groups and individuals with associations to a cultural heritage resource that may be affected by park management planning, design, construction or maintenance activities shall be provided with opportunities to participate in understanding and articulating the resource's cultural heritage value and in making decisions about its future.

7.2.13 Research

MNR encourages scientific research by qualified individuals contributing to the knowledge of natural and cultural history and to environmental management. Ontario Parks reviews proposed research to ensure adequate consideration of potential impacts on protected area resources, features, staff and visitors.

- Research and monitoring activities require authorization issued under the Research Authorization for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Policy and must be consistent with Ontario Parks' research and information strategies.
- Research is subject to development and management policies associated with the park's classification, unless special permission is given.
- Research must meet all requirements under applicable provincial and federal legislation, and may require additional permits or approval (e.g., MNR Wildlife Scientific Collector authorization or *Endangered Species Act, 2007* permits).
- Ontario Parks may consider allowing temporary facilities in support of approved research and monitoring activities. Sites altered by research activities must be rehabilitated as closely to their previous condition as possible, except where the specific intent of the research activities is disturbance for the purpose of ecological enhancement or restoration.
- Research initiatives specific to North Beach Provincial Park may include:
  - evolution of the park's landscapes in relation to natural processes (e.g., dune formation and dynamics);
  - ecological restoration and management in the park;
  - status of invasive species; and
  - reducing the effects of park uses and operations on ecological integrity of the dunes.
- Ontario Parks will especially encourage research that involves monitoring ecological changes on the park's natural and recreational landscapes over time.

7.2.14 Inventory and Monitoring

- Planning and management decisions are intended to ensure the ecological integrity of protected areas. Consideration will be given to social and economic components.
- Ontario Parks will ensure that these decisions are made with the best available information. Where this information is lacking, Ontario Parks may conduct inventories and monitoring, as necessary, to provide this information. Such efforts will be undertaken based on established methodologies and best practices.
- Avian diseases (e.g., botulism, a re-occurring problem on the Great Lakes) will continue to be monitored, as required. Fish and bird mortalities will continue to be reported to the appropriate authorities as per existing policies and protocols.

Coastal Sandbar System

A detailed life science inventory of North Beach Provincial Park may be considered. Prior to further consideration for addition to the park, an inventory of the Crown sandbar at Pleasant Bay would be required to identify valuable natural heritage features and to confirm panne significance.

- Ontario Parks will encourage and support inventory of the life science features and values of the regulated park and of the Pleasant Bay sandbar south of the park by MNR Peterborough District staff and partners.

If feasible, inventory and evaluation of the complete sandbar system – from Sandbanks in the south to Wellers Bay in the north – would provide a holistic perspective of this biologically significant system, and would be a valuable management tool for protecting the park's role within the greater park ecosystem.

7.3 Recreation Management Policies

7.3.1 Services for Visitors

- Services that will continue to be available to park visitors, subject to available resources, include a small canteen serving food and beverages, and a boat launch into North Bay. Additional services may be provided, based on sufficient demand and subject to financial and staff resources, if:
  - they meet the goal and objectives of the park; and
  - it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts to natural values and ecological processes.
- Park visitors will continue to be directed to Sandbanks Provincial Park and to local businesses and tourist establishments for products and services such as fishing and paddling equipment rentals, campgrounds and roofed accommodation, and for shoulder season use.

7.3.2 Access and Fees

The park gatehouse is the only official designated access. When all parking spots are filled, vehicles are denied entry; however, in 2001, to capture lost revenue, staff began collecting walk-in fees.

- Day use fees for vehicle and pedestrian entry will be collected at the park's gatehouse.
- An additional fee collection station may service visitors at Pleasant Bay (**Section 8.2**), following the development of a parking area at that location.

7.3.3 Hunting

- Hunting is not permitted within the park.

7.3.4 Recreational Fishing

- Recreational fishing is permitted at North Beach Provincial Park in accordance with provincial and federal fisheries regulations (i.e., the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997* and the federal *Fisheries Act*) as outlined in the Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary.

7.3.5 Motorized and Mechanized Travel

- ATV travel is prohibited in the park. Visitors arriving via ATV will not be permitted to bring their vehicles into the park.
- Currently, ATVs are illegally entering the park and damaging fragile dune habitat. To protect the dunes, public education and enforcement action will be taken to terminate this activity.
- Waters within the park boundary accommodate motorized boating of any horsepower rating. Boating on Lake Ontario and North Bay is subject to federal and provincial regulations, which include limiting speeds to 10 km/hr within 30 m of shore.
- Aircraft landing is not permitted within the park, including its boundary waters as per O. Reg. 347/07 under the PPCRA.
- Snowmobiling is not permitted within the park.

7.3.6 Other Recreational Uses

- Although swimming is permitted within the park, swimmers are warned through signage of a potential strong undertow in the waters of Lake Ontario.
- Picnicking, scenic viewing and nature appreciation are encouraged.
- Other recreational activities permitted within the park include:
  - canoeing and kayaking;
  - wind or muscle-powered sail sports such as windsurfing and sailing (except in designated swimming areas); and

- cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- Horseback riding will not be permitted within North Beach Provincial Park.

7.4 Operations Policies

The park operations plan provides staff with the necessary direction required to operate the park on a day to day basis.

- The park operations plan will include such topics as budget, staffing, maintenance schedules, natural heritage education, enforcement and emergency services.
- The provisions of the park operations plan will be consistent with the approved Ontario Parks Minimum Operating Standards (1992 revision), and will be reviewed and updated as required.
- Where possible, park operations will minimize environmental impacts. This could be accomplished in part by reducing energy use, noise and light pollution and vehicle emissions.

7.4.1 Natural Heritage Education

The goal of Natural Heritage Education (NHE) is to develop visitor awareness and appreciation of Ontario Parks' natural and cultural heritage, fostering a commitment to its protection for future generations. An NHE program has three components: *information*, *interpretation* and *outdoor recreation*.

At North Beach Provincial Park, the NHE program is designated as *self-use*; there is no outdoor recreation component. The park receives NHE support from staff at Sandbanks Provincial Park, with program direction being a component of the Sandbanks Provincial Park NHE Operating Plan. The interpretive theme for North Beach Provincial Park is the biologically significant sandbar system and its associated coastal wetlands, including the globally and provincially rare panne habitat.

- Park information and interpretation will be delivered through printed materials, signage, panels or displays, and informal communications with park staff.
- Partnerships with local tourism authorities to relay information to park visitors and potential park visitors may be pursued.

7.4.2 Partnerships

Partnerships will be essential to achieving the park's protection, recreation, scientific research and heritage appreciation objectives.

- When implementing the approved park management plan, Ontario Parks may explore and pursue opportunities for new or continuing partnerships, involving

other agencies and groups, through formal and informal partnership agreements.
- Partners may represent the local community, local and provincial interests or the private sector.
- Partners may work with Ontario Parks to assist with implementing the approved park management plan, as per provincial park policies and regulations.
- Ontario Parks may explore the possibility of a partnership with The Friends of Hillier Beaches and Dunes to support dune protection at North Beach Provincial Park.

7.5 Marketing and Communications Policies

- North Beach Provincial Park will be operated consistent with the current marketing strategy for Ontario Parks.
- Standard promotional strategies, including road signs and identification on provincial and regional maps, will publicize opportunities for day use outdoor recreation and scenic viewing at North Beach Provincial Park.
- Communications regarding park policies and other information will be delivered through the Ontario Parks website, printed materials, signage and direct communication by park staff.

7.6 Development Policies

- All development undertaken by Ontario Parks, or by partners on its behalf, will be subject to the Class EA-PPCR and will be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans that meet development standards for provincial parks.
- Areas proposed for development will require prior assessment for significant cultural heritage resources or natural heritage features to ensure these values are identified and protected at the site.
- The location, design and materials of all facilities will, as much as possible, reflect the natural character of the park. Durable, low maintenance and energy efficient designs and materials will be used whenever possible.
- As much as possible, new utility corridor development will avoid the regulated area of the park.

There is a need to upgrade and consolidate some of the existing development within the park. Major impacts as a result of past development within the dune include annual burying of the road, parking lots and buildings (privies, change stations and canteen) by moving sand.

- Future development and infrastructure replacement will investigate options for reducing ecological impacts of park operations and visitor use.
- New development will be designed and located so as to minimize impact on coastal processes.

7.6.1 Internal Roads

North Beach Provincial Park has one approximately 1.3 km-long internal, paved road that can accommodate two-way traffic. This road leads past the canteen to the boat launch, servicing three parking areas along the way. A 0.25 km section of gravel road previously extended north beyond the paved road to the park's boundary at the Township road allowance but is no longer maintained; this location is currently used as an unauthorized point of entry to the park.

A dirt laneway crosses the acquired property, linking County Road 27 to the Pleasant Bay sandbar. This laneway is currently closed to traffic.

- There will be no new roadways developed in the park.
- Existing roads may be improved and will be maintained to provincial park operating standards within a 20 m right of way. Roads will occupy only as much of the right of way as required to meet those standards.
- Access into North Beach Provincial Park from the Township road allowance at the north end of the park will be closed through signage and/or barriers to further decommission the former gravel road section extending from the existing paved park road.

7.6.2 Parking Areas

- No new parking lots will be developed within the park area north of County Road 27.
- A small, gravel parking lot may be developed on the acquired property (**Section 8.2**). This gated lot would provide overflow parking and accommodate visitors to the Pleasant Bay sandbar.

7.6.3 Day-Use Areas

- At present there is demand for a sheltered picnic area within the park. This structure will be constructed on an existing, grassy picnic area in the middle parking lot north of County Road 27 and will offer shelter in times of inclement weather.
- Existing vault privies will be replaced, based on demand and as funding permits. As privies and change stations are replaced, consideration will be given toward consolidation toward fewer, more effective units (e.g., two-unit comfort stations) to reduce their overall footprint in the park.

7.6.4 Trails

There are no existing trails within the park, although trampling and erosion have resulted in footpaths where park visitors frequently cross the dunes.

- To minimize dune impacts, physical structures may be used to direct and restrict pedestrian traffic to selected existing footpaths (**Section 7.2.10**).

7.6.5 Maintenance and Administrative Areas

The gatehouse is the official entry point into the park, providing minimal administrative services. The maintenance building is located nearby and also functions as the park office.

- The park gatehouse, maintenance building and other park facilities or structures may be upgraded or replaced as required.
- The existing water system will be fully replaced, dependent on available resources.
- Upon development of a parking lot within the acquired property (**Section 7.6.2**), the park gatehouse may be moved closer to County Rd. 27 to provide a more central location between the two park entry points.

8.0 ZONING AND ZONE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

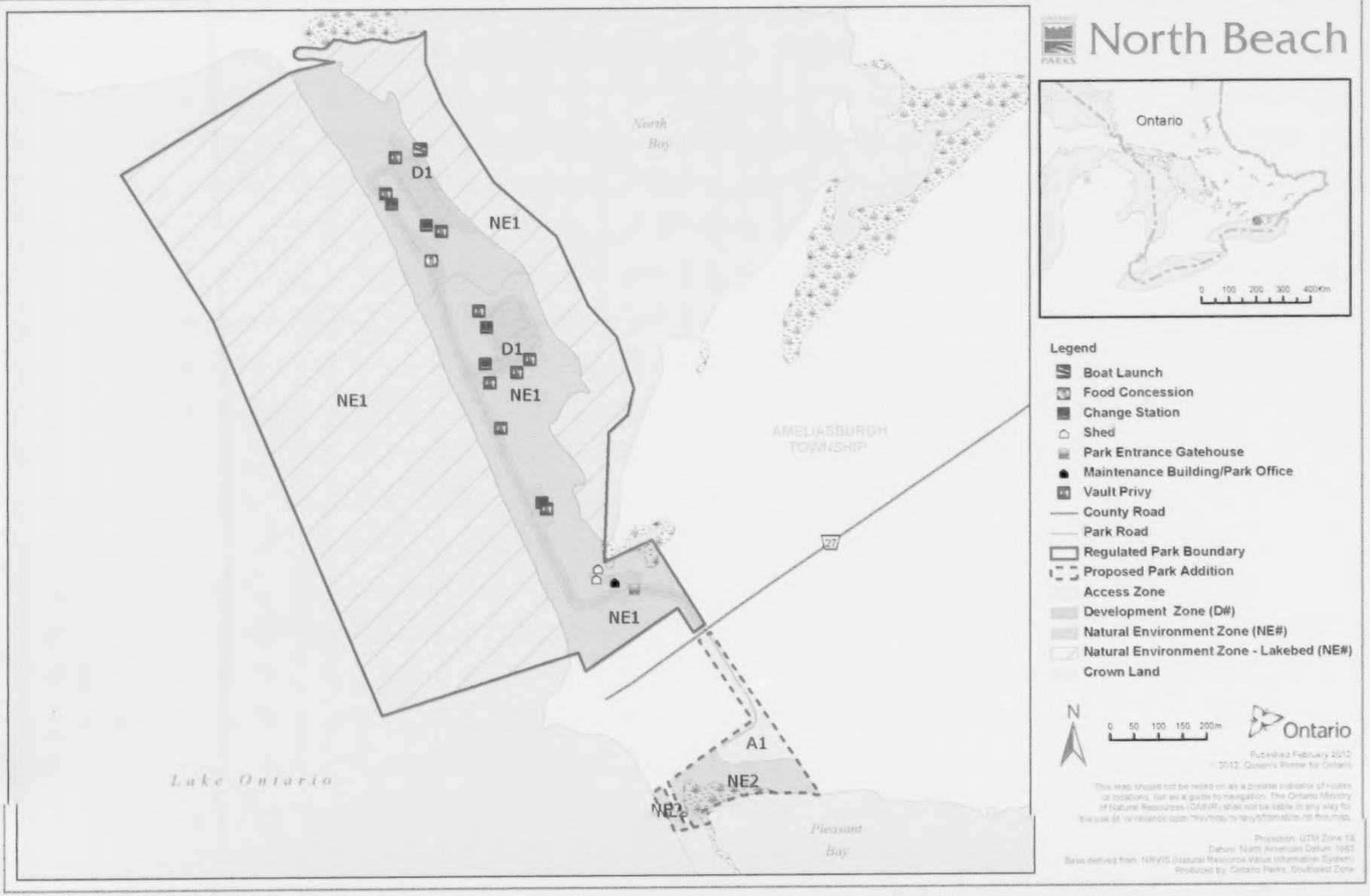
Lands within North Beach Provincial Park are zoned according to their environmental and cultural values, as well as their requirement for protection. Permitted activities in each type of zone are derived from Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies (1992 update).

Three zoning categories – development, access and natural environment – are designated for North Beach Provincial Park (**Figure 2**)[1]. Zones differentiate the sensitivity of the natural and cultural values, and the permissible degree of development, recreational uses and management practices within the park.

[1] Should the Pleasant Bay sandbar be regulated as part of the park, the intent would be to place this area in a nature reserve zone, a category that recognizes significant earth and life science features or ecosystems which require management to ensure their integrity. The sandbar would remain undeveloped.

FIGURE 2

PARK BOUNDARY, ZONING, AND DEVELOPMENT



8.1 Development Zone

Development zones contain areas of the park geared to supporting intensive day-use activities, and constitute a relatively small portion of most parks. Development may include roads, visitor control structures, beaches, picnic areas and maintenance facilities.

At this time, the specific location and footprint of proposed development within the park remains to be determined through site planning. The development zone boundaries identified in this plan (**Figure 2**) reflect the flexibility required to accommodate proposed development in suitable areas.

Zone D1 – Day Use Area (approximately 7 ha)

This zone includes all existing intensive development within the park: the paved road (20 m width), gatehouse area, maintenance building and yard, canteen, three parking areas and a boat launch to North Bay. There is no dock at the boat launch.

- The old pumphouse will be removed from its current location following construction of a new water system within the maintenance area.
- The existing boat launch will remain gravel-based and will not be hardened.
- A picnic shelter (**Section 7.6.3**) will be developed within the existing picnic grounds of the middle parking lot.

8.2 Access Zone

Access zones serve as staging areas. Generally development is limited to roads and visitor control structures. Provisions may be made for self-use orientation, interpretive or educational facilities. Limited facilities for research and park management may also be present.

Zone A1 – Pleasant Bay Parking Area (approximately 1 ha)

These acquired lands are currently undeveloped, and consist of regenerating agricultural field overgrown with buckthorn. A dirt laneway connects County Road 27 to the Pleasant Bay sandbar.

- This zone will serve as a staging area for access to the Pleasant Bay sandbar, should the sandbar be added to North Beach Provincial Park in the future.
- A gravel parking area (**Section 7.6.2**) may be developed, and will be serviced by either the gatehouse or an on-site fee collection station.
- One vault privy may also be developed in this zone.

8.3 Natural Environment Zone

Natural environment zones include natural landscapes which permit the minimum level of development required to support low-intensity recreational activities. Development is generally limited to necessary signs and minimal interpretive facilities.

The remainder of the park, outside the development and access zones, is zoned natural environment.

Zone NE1 – North Beach and Dunes (approximately 83 ha)

Zone NE1 encompasses the dunes and beach and extends into the adjacent lake beds: approximately 90 m into North Bay and 400 m into Lake Ontario. The wooded area near the park entrance is also included within zone NE1.

- Development in zone NE1 is limited to vault privies and change stations.

Zone NE2 – Pleasant Bay Acquired Lands (approximately 3 ha)

Zone NE2 encompasses the non-developed portion of the acquired lands.

- A small clearing will accommodate boat access to Pleasant Bay.
- Zone NE2 may be used by visitors year-round to access the Pleasant Bay sandbar and wetland for recreational purposes such as nature appreciation, hiking and waterfowl hunting.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Park development, operations and resource management will be contingent upon funding availability and unforeseeable changes in priorities or policy, and will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Class EA-PPCR. These proposals will be phased in as follows:

- A boundary amendment will add the acquired lands to the park through regulation under the PPCRA (**Section 4.1**).
- Restore native vegetation to degraded areas through marram grass planting (**Section 7.2.10**)[2].
- Complete the new water system, including installing associated water lines and removing the old pumphouse (**Section 7.6.5**).

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[2] Appropriate Class EA-PPCR evaluation and consultation requirements for this recurring project will be coordinated with park management planning.

- Construct a picnic shelter within the existing picnic area of the middle parking lot north of County Road 27 (**Section 7.6.3**).
- Replace existing vault privies (**Section 7.6.3**).
- Close and/or further decommission former section of park road (**Section 7.6.1**).
- Construct a small gravel parking lot and washroom facility on the acquired lands (**Section 8.2**).
- Install a fee collection system to service the new parking lot (**Section 7.3.2**).

10.0 PLAN AMENDMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

The park management plan can be re-written or amended to address changing issues or conditions. This plan will be examined after twenty years for the need for a replacement, amendment or administrative update.

An amendment can be considered to address specific issues or needs originating from internal discussions or in response to external requests to keep management direction current and relevant.

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APPENDIX: OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

Summary and Results of Aboriginal Involvement

Notice and information on park management planning for North Beach Provincial Park was provided to one local Aboriginal community and two provincial treaty organizations at the terms of reference and background information stages. An opportunity to review and provide input and comment on the final draft of this preliminary management plan was provided to the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and to the Missisauga First Nation communities. Aboriginal involvement will be ongoing throughout the process.

Summary and Results of Public Consultation

Public consultation is a very important part of the North Beach park management planning process. Consultation methods include: direct mailings, advertisement in local newspapers and policy proposal notices on the Environmental Registry. Ontario Parks staff at Sandbanks Provincial Park and at Southeast Zone office in Kingston is available to respond directly to individual inquiries.

Direct mailing recipients include individuals, groups and agencies that responded to the invitation to participate, residents and corporate managers of adjacent lands, and new individuals requesting addition to the mailing list (ongoing during the planning process).

This North Beach Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan is the third of four stages in the management planning process for this park:

- **Stage 1 – Terms of Reference:** A combined management planning process for North Beach and Lake on the Mountain provincial parks began in August 2004, following release of the approved terms of reference. An invitation to participate was advertised to the public and interested participants were given 30 days to review the terms of reference.

- **Stage 2 – Background Information:** In 2006, the terms of reference were amended to remove the requirement for a management options (formerly "issues and plan alternatives") document from the planning process. At the same time, a background information file on the two parks was made available for public review. A 47-day public consultation period followed, from which three detailed responses (one individual and two interest groups) were received concerning North Beach Provincial Park. These comments expressed support for potential park expansion and the continuation of traditional activities such as waterfowl hunting and non-motorized recreation.

- **Stage 3 – Preliminary Management Plan:** The public will have an opportunity to review the preliminary management plan for North Beach for a

minimum period of 45 days after its formal release. This will allow interested participants to comment on proposals in the plan.

- **Stage 4 – Approved Park Management Plan:** MNR will consider comments submitted during public consultation when finalizing the North Beach management plan. A decision notice will be posted on the Environmental Registry and will provide a link to the approved management plan.

Ontario Parks will retain on file reference copies of background information, the terms of reference, the preliminary park management plan and the approved park management plan for North Beach Provincial Park.